

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/682,030

Examiner

Jeffrey R. West

Applicant(s)

STARK ET AL.

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the Amendment filed February 26, 2004.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-9 and 11-31.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 06 February 2003 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

DETAILED ACTION

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Michael Tersillo on April 02, 2004.

The application has been amended as follows:

In claim 18, line 5, "said database" has been changed to ---said data storage device---.

In claim 20, lines 3-4, "the collection component" has been changed to ---a collection component---.

In claim 28, line 12, "at least one of" has been deleted.

In claim 29, lines 1-2, "wherein said server system further" has been changed to - --further comprising a code segment---.

In claim 31, line 6, "the client system" has been changed to ---the user system---.

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 1-9 and 10-31 are considered to be allowable over the cited prior art for the following reasons:

U.S. Patent No. 5,817,958 to Uchida et al. discloses an automatic plant monitoring and diagnosing method/system as well as a plant equipped with the system, wherein the plant is a boiling water or pressurized water nuclear reactor plant (column 1, lines 12-18), and the system further comprises a first input means for receiving detection data of plant operating conditions, apparatus operating conditions, such as jet pump (column 1, lines 50-51) and core spray (column 2, lines 16-18) conditions, and environmental conditions, a second input means for receiving plant inspection data, a first input data processing means for preparing data for use in plant monitoring and diagnosis based on the detection data from the first input means, a second input data processing means for preparing data for use in plant monitoring and diagnosis based on the inspection data from the second input means, and a plant chart (i.e. database) for storing the data prepared by the first and second input data processing means (i.e. cross-referencing the operating data and the inspection data) along with past/historical inspection data/results (column 3, lines 14-20 and 35-46) for use in the plant monitoring and diagnosis (column 4, lines 18-31).

Uchida also discloses that the operating conditions of each apparatus in the plant is detected by their respective detection means and is accumulated, and updated (column 6, lines 22-23), in the appropriate storage means continuously through an on-line monitor (column 6, lines 7-12) and that the collected apparatus data and inspection data are sent to a central control room where they are combined (column 7, lines 18-25) and displayed to allow a user to inquire about the condition of a

particular apparatus or location wherein the automated system then calculates the residual life evaluation, for presentation to the user, along with the apparatus/member name, apparatus description, and the material name (column 16, lines 19-40, column 19, lines 9-18, and Figure 17A). Uchida also discloses inputting inspection data including material names as well as engineering conditions, such as the conditions of welds (column 13, lines 48-60).

U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0056335-A1 to Ikeda et al. teaches a remote monitoring diagnostics system and method for providing centralized remote monitoring of multiple power plants (0002) comprising collecting and storing, to a centralized database, operating plant data, the database also containing past plant data associated with errors having occurred to the plant and actions taken to cope with the errors, and analyzing the plant data according to the database in order to send a report to the user of the plant regarding the causes for, or action to cope with, the error in the plant (0006). Ikeda teaches that a field monitoring/client system collecting plant data from the controller of the power plant transmits the plant data, for downloading, to a remote monitoring center over a public phone line, or an Internet connection (0017), in response to a request for information (0020), and sending information, for downloading, from the remote monitoring center to the field monitoring/client system (0031). Ikeda also teaches that, upon the occurrence of an error and in response to a request to search the database for relevant error information (0064), the local field monitoring system retrieves the requested information and provides a report to be downloaded by the maintenance engineer

wherein the report contains data indicating when the error occurred, the name of the plant where the error occurred, and the contents of the error (0024). Ikeda also teaches communicating and connecting, over a server, the remote monitoring center to the field monitoring/client center through a Firewall (0031 and 0035).

U.S. Patent No. 6,487,518 to Miyazaki et al. discloses an inspection management system for components of a power generation plant (column 1, lines 7-11) through comparisons between previous and current inspection data (column 3, lines 18-25) comprising obtaining measurement data, classified by component (column 6, lines 53-64), and current inspection results, and modifying the next required inspection of the plant component based upon the inspection results (column 8, lines 1-17) to provide a schedule of future inspection requirements and notifying the user of the updated inspection schedule, with the corresponding calculated information affecting the schedule, through a printer or CRT (column 8, lines 64-65).

As noted above, the inventions of Uchida, Ikeda, and Miyazaki teach many of the features of the claimed invention. None of the cited art, however, teaches or suggests, in combination with the other claimed limitations for managing inspection requirements, including cross-referencing weld information, determining next required inspection of each plant component based on inspection result information and regulatory requirements, developing a schedule of future inspection requirements sortable by inspection date, component, inspection criteria satisfaction, and defect indication, in addition to providing information in response to an inquiry

including information relating to component identification, component description, inspection type, last inspection data, inspection criteria result, defect indication, inspection comments, next required inspection, and a basis for the next required inspection.

3. The following references are also cited as being pertinent to the claimed subject matter.

JP Publication No. 11-154011 to Ishikawa et al. teaches a plant maintenance planning support system that generates a periodical inspection schedule that is changed to be correctly maintained but does not teach in combination with the other claimed limitations for managing inspection requirements, including cross-referencing weld information, determining next required inspection of each plant component based on inspection result information and regulatory requirements, developing a schedule of future inspection requirements sortable by inspection date, component, inspection criteria satisfaction, and defect indication, in addition to providing information in response to an inquiry including information relating to component identification, component description, inspection type, last inspection data, inspection criteria result, defect indication, inspection comments, next required inspection, and a basis for the next required inspection.

U.S. Patent No. 5,856,931 to McCasland teaches a method and system for identifying, organizing, scheduling, executing, analyzing and documenting inspection activities including generating a criticality factor that is ranked to give a list, in order

of descending importance, of all items requiring inspection based on each element's overdue status based on a normal inspection value, the class of equipment to which the item belongs and the profitability or importance of the machine to which the item belongs, but does not teach in combination with the other claimed limitations for managing inspection requirements, including cross-referencing weld information, determining next required inspection of each plant component based on inspection result information and regulatory requirements, developing a schedule of future inspection requirements sortable by inspection date, component, inspection criteria satisfaction, and defect indication, in addition to providing information in response to an inquiry including information relating to component identification, component description, inspection type, last inspection data, inspection criteria result, defect indication, inspection comments, next required inspection, and a basis for the next required inspection.

U.S. Patent No. 5,724,261 to Denny et al. teaches a data processing system and method for compiling data during property inspection and maintenance operations including a sorting means for arranging the inspection data according to at least one predetermined parameter to conduct an efficient inspection and analysis of the property but does not teach, in combination with the other claimed limitations for managing inspection requirements, including cross-referencing weld information, determining next required inspection of each plant component based on inspection result information and regulatory requirements, developing a schedule of future inspection requirements sortable by inspection date, component, inspection criteria

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satisfaction, and defect indication, in addition to providing information in response to an inquiry including information relating to component identification, component description, inspection type, last inspection data, inspection criteria result, defect indication, inspection comments, next required inspection, and a basis for the next required inspection.

4. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

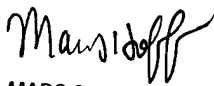
5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeffrey R. West whose telephone number is (571)272-2226. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Marc S. Hoff can be reached on (571)272-2216. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

jrw
April 4, 2004


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